

Factsheet

31st PUBLICATION OF THE RULES OF GOLF 2008

Principal Changes

General

The changes to the Rules generally fall into two broad categories: (1) those that improve the clarity of the Rules and (2) those that reduce the penalties in certain circumstances to ensure that they are proportionate.

Definitions

Advice — Amended to allow the exchange of information on distance, as it is not considered to be “advice.”

Lost Ball — Amended to clarify substituted ball issues and to include the concept of “stroke-and-distance” (see corresponding changes to Rules 18-1, 24-3, 25-1c, 26 and 27-1).

Matches — Definition withdrawn and replaced by two new Definitions, “Forms of Match Play” and “Forms of Stroke Play.”

Rules

Rule 1-2. Exerting Influence on Ball — Note added to clarify what constitutes a serious breach of Rule 1-2.

Rule 4-1. Form and Make of Clubs — Amended to reduce the penalty for carrying, but not using, a non-conforming club or a club in breach of Rule 4-2, from disqualification to the same as carrying more than 14 clubs.

Rule 12-1. Searching for Ball; Seeing Ball — Amended to include searching for a ball in an obstruction.

Rule 12-2. Identifying Ball — Amended to allow a player to lift his ball for identification in a hazard (see corresponding change to Rule 15-3, removing the exemption from penalty for playing a wrong ball in a hazard).

Rule 13-4. Ball in Hazard; Prohibited Actions — Exception 1 amended for clarification; Exception 2 amended to refer to Rule 13-2; Exception 3 added to exempt a player from penalty under Rule 13-4a (testing the condition of the hazard) in certain circumstances.

Rule 14-3. Artificial Devices, Unusual Equipment and Unusual Use of Equipment — Amended to refer to the unusual use of equipment (see also new Exception on use of equipment in a traditionally accepted manner) and new Exception added for players with a legitimate medical reason to use an artificial device or unusual equipment.

Note added to clarify that a Local Rule may be introduced allowing the use of distance-measuring devices; previously authorised by Decision only.

Rule 15-2. Substituted Ball — Exception added to avoid a “double penalty” when the player incorrectly substitutes a ball and plays from a wrong place (see corresponding change to Rule 20-7c).

Rule 15-3. Wrong Ball — Amended to remove the exemption from penalty for playing a wrong ball in a hazard (see corresponding change to Rule 12-2, allowing the player to lift a ball for identification in a hazard).

Rule 16-1e. Standing Astride or on Line of Putt — Exception added to apply no penalty if the act was inadvertent or to avoid standing on another player’s line of putt; previously authorised by Decision only.

Rule 18. Ball at Rest Moved — Penalty statement amended to avoid a “double penalty” when the player lifts a ball without authority and incorrectly substitutes a ball (see related changes to Rules 15-2 and 20-7c).

Rule 18-1. Ball at Rest Moved; By Outside Agency — Note added to clarify the procedure when a ball might have been moved by an outside agency.

Rule 19-2. Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped By Player, Partner, Caddie or Equipment — Amended to reduce the penalty in both match play and stroke play to one stroke.

Rule 20-3a. Placing and Replacing; By Whom and Where - Amended to reduce the penalty for having the wrong person place or replace a ball to one stroke.

Rule 20-7c. Playing from Wrong Place; Stroke Play — Note added to avoid a “double penalty” when the player plays from a wrong place and incorrectly substitutes a ball (see corresponding change to Rule 15-2).

Rule 24-1. Movable Obstruction — Amended to allow a flagstick, whether attended, removed or held up, to be moved when a ball is in motion.

Rule 24-3. Ball in Obstruction Not Found;

Rule 25-1c. Ball in Abnormal Ground Condition Not Found;

Rule 26-1. Water Hazards (Including Lateral Water Hazards);

Rule 27-1. Stroke and Distance; Ball Out of Bounds; Ball Not Found Within Five Minutes -

In the above Rules, the term “reasonable evidence” has been replaced by “known or virtually certain” when determining whether a ball that has not been found may be treated as lost in an obstruction (Rule 24-3), an abnormal ground condition (Rule 25-1) or a water hazard (Rule 26-1). See corresponding change to Definition of “Lost Ball” and Rule 18-1.

Appendix I

Seams of Cut Turf — New Specimen Local Rule added.

Temporary Immovable Obstruction — Clause II of the Specimen Local Rule amended to include an additional requirement that, for intervention relief to be granted, the temporary immovable obstruction must be on the player’s line of play.

Appendix II

Adjustability — Amended to allow forms of adjustability other than weight adjustment, subject to evaluation by The R&A.

Clubhead; Plain in Shape — Amended to clarify meaning of “plain in shape” and list some of the features that are not permitted; previously detailed in guidelines on equipment Rules.

Clubhead; Dimensions, Volume and Moment of Inertia — Sections added on moment of inertia and putter head dimensions; previously detailed in guidelines on equipment Rules and test protocols.

Clubhead; Spring Effect and Dynamic Properties — New section added on spring effect. The limit, as detailed in the Pendulum Test Protocol, now applies to all clubs (except putters) and in all forms of the game; previously covered by condition of competition.